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SAFSS

S E C R E T 101947Z
[redacted] AGS.
CORONA
FROM LT COL FORD FOR [redacted]
[redacted] 3932

1. IN RESPONSE TO YOUR REQUEST, I WOULD LIKE TO SUMMARIZE OUR PLAN RELATIVE TO [redacted] LET ME PREFACE THESE REMARKS BY SAYING THAT THIS PLAN IN NO WAY CHANGES OR ALTERS CORONA SECURITY PLANS, OPERATIONS OR RESPONSIBILITIES. THE CHANGES WHICH WILL OCCUR AS A RESULT OF THIS PLAN WILL BE ON THE OVERT AIR FORCE SIDE. THE BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR THESE CHANGES STEM FROM THE FOLLOWING FACTS.

2. THE DISCOVERER PROGRAM WAS BEGUN IN 1958 WITH A VARIETY OF OBJECTIVES WHICH INCLUDED BIOMEDICAL, SPACE AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEVELOPMENTS, AGENA DEVELOPMENTS, RECOVERY SYSTEM DEVELOPMENTS, TRACKING AND CONTROL NETWORK DEVELOPMENT, ETC. DISCOVERER (LATER 162) WAS, OF COURSE, THE CORONA COVER. CORONA WAS CONCEIVED AS A HIGH RISK, SHORT TERM, EARLY RECONNAISSANCE CAPABILITY.

3. SOME FIVE AND ONE-HALF YEARS, 80 PLUS LAUNCHES, 60 ORBITAL FLIGHTS LATER, WE FIND [redacted] STILL IN SSD, CONTINUING TO DEVELOPE ITEMS LONG SINCE CONSIDERED TO BE FULLY INVENTED, WITH THE PROGRAM STILL ENJOYING A VERY SPECIAL STATUS. THIS SPECIAL STATUS INCLUDES A HIGH LEVEL OF EXPENDITURE, A HIGH PRIORITY, PROMINENT BY ITS HIGH LEVEL OF ACTIVITY, WITH NO FEASIBLE OR DEFENSIBLE MEANS FOR ITS FURTHER CONTINUATION.

4. ADDITIONALLY, BECAUSE OF ITS PROMINENCE, IT HAS BEEN EXPOSED TO INCREASING PRESSURES BY UNWITTING ACTIVITES WITHIN THE AIR FORCE FOR VARIOUS TYPES OF INVESTIGATIONS AND DATA COLLECTING EFFORTS. EXAMPLES ARE RELIABILITY SURVEYS, CONTRACTUAL SURVEYS, INSPECTOR GENERAL INSPECTIONS, ETC. ALL SUCH EXCURSIONS INTO [redacted] ACTIVITY ARE DELICATE AND DIFFICULT TO CONTROL. A GREAT DEAL OF ENERGY IS EXPENDED IN PROVIDING NECESSARY PROTECTIVE MEASURES TO AVOID EITHER EMBARRASSMENT OR A SECURITY INFRACTION. THIS PROBLEM IS A TWO WAY STREET IN THAT THE [redacted] IS OBSTENSIBLY UNDER THE COMMAND OF GENERAL FUNK, COMMANDER OF SSD, WHO IS EXPECTED TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR AND RESPONSIVE TO UNWITTING ELEMENTS WITHIN THE AIR FORCE ON MATTERS TO DO WITH [redacted] THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE IN VIEW OF THE TRUE FACT OF THE MATTER THAT [redacted] IS RESPONSIBLE TO THE NRO. THIS

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LATTER FACT MAKES IT DIFFICULT TO EVEN COMMUNICATE AND DO BUSINESS BETWEEN [redacted] PERSONNEL AND NRO PERSONNEL.

5. ANOTHER FACTOR WHICH IS PERTINENT IS THAT THE PUBLICATION OF DOD DIRECTIVE 5200.13, WHICH PLACED VERY STRINGENT CONTROLS ON INFORMATION CONCERNING AIR FORCE SPACE ACTIVITIES, HAD THE EFFECT OF DRYING UP A COVER PLAN IN THE CLASSICAL SENSE. THIS IS TO SAY, THE MILEAGE WHICH WE USED TO OBTAIN FROM THE PUBLICATION OF DISCOVERER ACHIEVEMENTS IN THIS AND THAT COULD NO LONGER BE REALIZED.

6. IN SUMMARY, IT HAS BECOME QUITE EVIDENT THAT THE ORIGINAL DISCOVERER COVER CONCEPT HAS BEEN EXPLOITED TO ITS FULLEST AND HAS OUTLIVED ITS USEFULNESS. FURTHER, BECAUSE OF CHANGES IN ORGANIZATIONS, WORKING ARRANGEMENTS, AND THE EVOLVEMENT OF THE NRO, THE DISCOVERER CONCEPT WAS BECOMING MORE OF A LIABILITY IN AN OPERATING SENSE THAT AN ASSET. FOR THESE REASONS, IT WAS FELT APPROPRIATE TO BREAK AWAY FROM THE DISCOVERER LINEAGE AND ESTABLISH A NEW PROGRAM WITHIN THE SPECIAL PROJECTS ENVIRONMENT WHICH WOULD PROVIDE PROTECTION FROM EXTERNAL PRESSURES AND ELIMINATE A NUMBER OF DIFFICULT WORKING RELATIONSHIPS. ON THE OVERT SIDE, IT IS APPARENT THAT [redacted] HAS ACHIEVED THE GOALS IT SET OUT TO DO. IT IS FURTHER APPARENT THAT SPECIAL PROJECTS HAS PLACED UPON IT FROM TIME TO TIME NEW AND HIGH PRIORITY EFFORTS. THESE READJUSTMENTS HAVE IN THE PAST OCCURRED RAPIDLY AND WITH VERY LITTLE FOREWARNING, E.G. [redacted].

7. IN LIGHT OF THE ABOVE BACKGROUND AND IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE FOLLOWING GROUND RULES:

A. LAS[redacted] LAUNCH APRIL 1964.
B. FIRS[redacted] LAUNCH 15 MAY 64.
C. NO CHANGE IN C LAUNCH SCHEDULE.
D. MINIMIZE PERTURBATION.
E. NO CHANGE IN SECURITY.

WE HAVE UNDERTAKEN TO ESTABLISH THE FOLLOWING ENVIRONMENT.

A. AT HQ USAF AND HQ AFSC THE [redacted] IS BEING BROUGHT TO A CONCLUSION. THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW PROGRAM, [redacted], MAY COME TO LIGHT AT A FUTURE DATE, BUT DUE TO THE FACT THAT IT IS NOT REPORTED ON AT THOSE LEVELS AND THE FACT THAT NOTHING SUBSTANTIVE IS KNOWN ABOUT IT, THE EFFORTS WILL REMAIN OBSCURE.

B. AT SSD, REQUIREMENTS WERE PLACED UPON SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS FOR A NEW SPECIAL PROJECTS PROGRAM, [redacted]. THESE REQUIREMENTS WERE DESCRIBED AS BEING OF HIGHEST PRIORITY, WITH A VERY EARLY LAUNCH DATE. IT WAS MADE CLEAR THAT THE ONLY WAY THESE REQUIREMENTS COULD BE MET WAS BY EMPLOYING EXISTING RESOURCES. INITIALLY THE UNWITTING REQUIREMENTS PEOPLE (THOR, AGENA, C&C) WERE ALLOWED TO TRY AND SOLVE THE IMPOSSIBLE PROBLEM. ORALLY, WORDS WERE USED WHICH IMPLIED THAT PROBABLY SOME PROGRAM WOULD HAVE TO BE ROBBED OF RESOURCES TO MEET TH[redacted] REQUIREMENTS AND THAT THIS WAS BEING CONSIDERED AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS.

C. AT THE CONTRACTOR'S PLANT (LMSC) [redacted] JUST FADES QUIETLY AWAY WITHOUT ANNOUNCEMENT OR FANFARE. THE CONTRACTS FOR PROGRAM PECULIARS WILL BE ADMINISTRATIVELY TRANSFERRED TO [redacted] [redacted] ACTUALLY, THE WORK STATEMENTS WILL BE WITHDRAWN AND REISSUED WITH THE NEW NUMBER. THIS COURSE OF ACTION WAS SELECTED AFTER CONSULTATION WITH WITTING LMSC MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL AS BEING THE SOLUTION WHICH WOULD CAUSE THE FEWEST WAVES. AN ANNOUNCEMENT TO THE CONTRACTOR THAT [redacted] WAS BEING BROUGHT TO A CONCLUSION WOULD PROBABLY PRODUCE A NUMBER OF VERY UNDESIRABLE REACTIONS SUCH AS PUBLICITY, POLITICAL REACTIONS, JOB UNREST, STOCK FLUCTUATIONS AND THE LIKE. THE WITTING PEOPLE UNDERSTAND; THE UNWITTING PEOPLE WILL PROBABLY INTERPREST THE CHANGE AS ANOTHER AIR FORCE REDESIGNATION AND REORIENTATION. AS LONG AS THEIR JOBS ARE NOT AFFECTED, THEY WON'T CARE. WE ARE RAPIDLY ACCOMPLISHING A REDOCUMENTATION EFFORT WHICH WILL PERMIT AN ISSUANCE OF [redacted] LMSC DOCUMENTS TO BE AVAILABLE FOR USE ON THE FIRST LAUNCH IN MAY, E.G., COUNTDOWN MANUALS, TEST DOCUMENTS, ETC.

8. INSTRUCTIONS TO DATE TO ALL ACTIVITIES HAVE BEEN THOSE MECHANICAL THINGS WHICH ARE NECESSARY TO CREATE THE ENVIRONMENT DESCRIBED ABOVE AND WHICH ARE NECESSARY TO ACCOMPLISH THE WORK UNDER THESE RULES.

9. [redacted] HAS BEEN KEPT INFORMED ON ALL THESE STEPS AND IS FULLY AWARE OF PROGRESS TO DATE. FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, I SUGGEST YOU MIGHT LIKE TO DISCUSS THE PLAN WITH [redacted], DIRECTOR, NRO SECURITY AS HE HAS BEEN AWARE OF THE PLAN IN DETAIL SINCE ITS INCEPTION IN OCT-NOV 63.

S E C R E T

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